

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 171844

FOL RPT KUALA LUMPUR 6618 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BANGKOK
HONG KONG JAKARTA MANILA SINGAPORE VIENTIANE PEKING CINCPAC
5 JUL 78 QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 6618

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, VM, US, CH

SUBJ: VIETNAMESE DCM ATTENDS JULY 4TH RECEPTION

1. THE DCM AT THE SRV EMBASSY HERE, TRAN LE DUC,
ATTENDED THE EMBASSY'S JULY 4TH RECEPTION.
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME ONE OF THE VIETNAMESE HAS ACCEPTED A
USG INVITATION HERE. WHEN WE INVITED AMBASSADOR
VU BACH MAI TO THE RECEPTION, ALONG WITH THE ENTIRE
DIPLOMATIC COORPS, THE SRV EMBASSY CALLED TO INFORM
US THAT THE AMBASSADOR WAS OUT OF TOWN AND TO
REQUEST AN INVITAION FOR TRAN LE DUC, THEN CHARGE',
IN HIS PLACE. VU BACH MAI APPARENTLY HAD RETURNED
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TO K.L. ON JULY 1, EARLIER THAN HE HAD BEEN EXPECTED,
BUT HE DID NOT ATTEND THE RECEPTION.

2. WHEN THE AMBASSADOR GREETED DUC ON HIS ARRIVAL,
DUC SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE AMBASSADOR
HAD BEEN AT THE PARIS PEACE TALKS ON VIETNAM AND
HE CONVEYED SRV DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER PHAM HIEN'S

REGARDS. THE AMBASSADOR CONFIRMED THAT HE HAD INDEED KNOWN PHAM HIEN IN PARIS AND EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR HIS MESSAGE. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBOFFS LATER, DUC REPEATED THAT HE HAD CONVEYED PHAM HIEN'S REGARDS TO THE AMBASSADOR.

3. DUC WAS VERY WARM AN FRIENDLY IN HIS CON-
VERSATION WITH A NUMBER OF EMBOFFS AT THE RECEPTION,
AND WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO CONGRATULATE US ON
OUR NATIONAL DAY. HE SEVERAL TIMES EXPRESSED THE
HOPE THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES WOULD
IMPROVE, ALTHOUGH HE MADE A POINT OF SAYING THAT
THE USG MUST MAKE THE FIRST OVERT MOVE TOWARD
NORMALIZATION. HE DID CITE THE RECENT VISIT BY THE
HONG KONG AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AS A
POSITIVE AND ENCOURAGING STEP TOWARDS AN IMPROVE-
MENT IN RELATIONS.

4. DUC DISCUSSED SRV-PRC RELATIONS IN SOME DETAIL
WITH EMBOFFS. HE WAS SURPRISINGLY UNCOMPROMISING
IN LAYING THE BLAME FOR THE DETERORATION IN
SINO-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS ON THE PRC AND PORTRAYING
VIETNAM AS THE AGGRIEVED PARTNER IN THE PIECE.
AT NO TIME DID HE EXPRESS A HOPE THAT RELATIONS
BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES MIGHT SHOW SIGNS OF
IMPROVEMENT. DUC SAID THAT THE SRV WAS NOT
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DISCRIMINATING AGAINST THE OVERSEAS CHINESE BUT
THAT THE STEPS BEING TAKEN TO INTEGRATE THE
SOUTHERN POPULATION INTO THE NEW VIETNAMESE SOCIETY
WERE USED WITH ALL SEGMENTS OF THAT POPULATION,
INCLUDING THE CHINESE. HE SAID THAT THE PRC,
IN PURSUIT OF ITS TRADITIONAL GOAL OF DOMINATING
VIETNAM, HAD "INITIATED THE CURRENT UNREST"
AMONG THE OVERSEAS CHINESE IN THE COUNTRY AND HAD
TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION TO JUSTIFY
INTERVENTION IN VIETNAM. AN EXAMPLE OF SUCH
INTERVENTION WAS SENDING SHIPS TO VIETNAMESE
HARBORS TO PICK UP CHINESE WHO WISH TO GO TO THE
PRC. ACCORDING TO DUC THE CHINESE HAD DEMANDED
IMPOSSIBLE CONDITIONS FOR THE SHIPS AND SO THE
SRV HAS NOT ALLOWED THEM TO LAND.

5. DUC ALSO SPOKE AT LENGTH ON THE PROBLEM OF
THE REFUGEES WHO HAVE LEFT VIETNAM BY BOAT. HE
SAID THAT 90 TO 95 PERCENT OF THEM ARE ETHNIC
CHINESE AND SO THEIR LOYALTY TO VIETNAM IS NOT AS
STRONG AS THE NATIVE VIETNAMESE. (WE SAID THAT
WE DID NOT THINK THE PERCENTAGE OF CHINESE AMONG

THE REFUGEES WAS THAT HIGH ALTHOUGH WE BELIEVE
THAT A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER ARE CHINESE.) DC
SAID THAT AT FIRST THE SRV HAD NOT MADE MUCH OF
AN EFFORT TO STOP THE REFUGEES FROM LEAVING
VIETNAM, BELIEVING THAT THOSE WHO WERE UNWILLING
TO ADAPT TO THE NEW SITUATION WOULD ONLY BE A
HANDICAP TO RECONSTRUCTION. HOWEVER, IN RECENT
MONTHS THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT WAS MAKING MORE
OF AN EFFORT TO STOP THE OUTFLOW OF REFUGEES,
BUT COULD ONLY DO SO MUCH BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTY
OF POLICING A LONG COASTLINE. WHEN ASKED WHAT THE SRV
DID WITH THOSE WHO WERE CAUGHT ATTEMPTING TO
ESCAPE, DUC MADE A POINT OF SAYING THAT THEY
WERE NOT SENT TO JAIL, BUT THAT THEY WERE SENT
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BACK TO THEIR HOMES AND "PERSUADED" TO REMAIN
IN VIETNAM AND CONTRIBUTE TO NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION.
MILLER

UNQUOTE VANCE

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